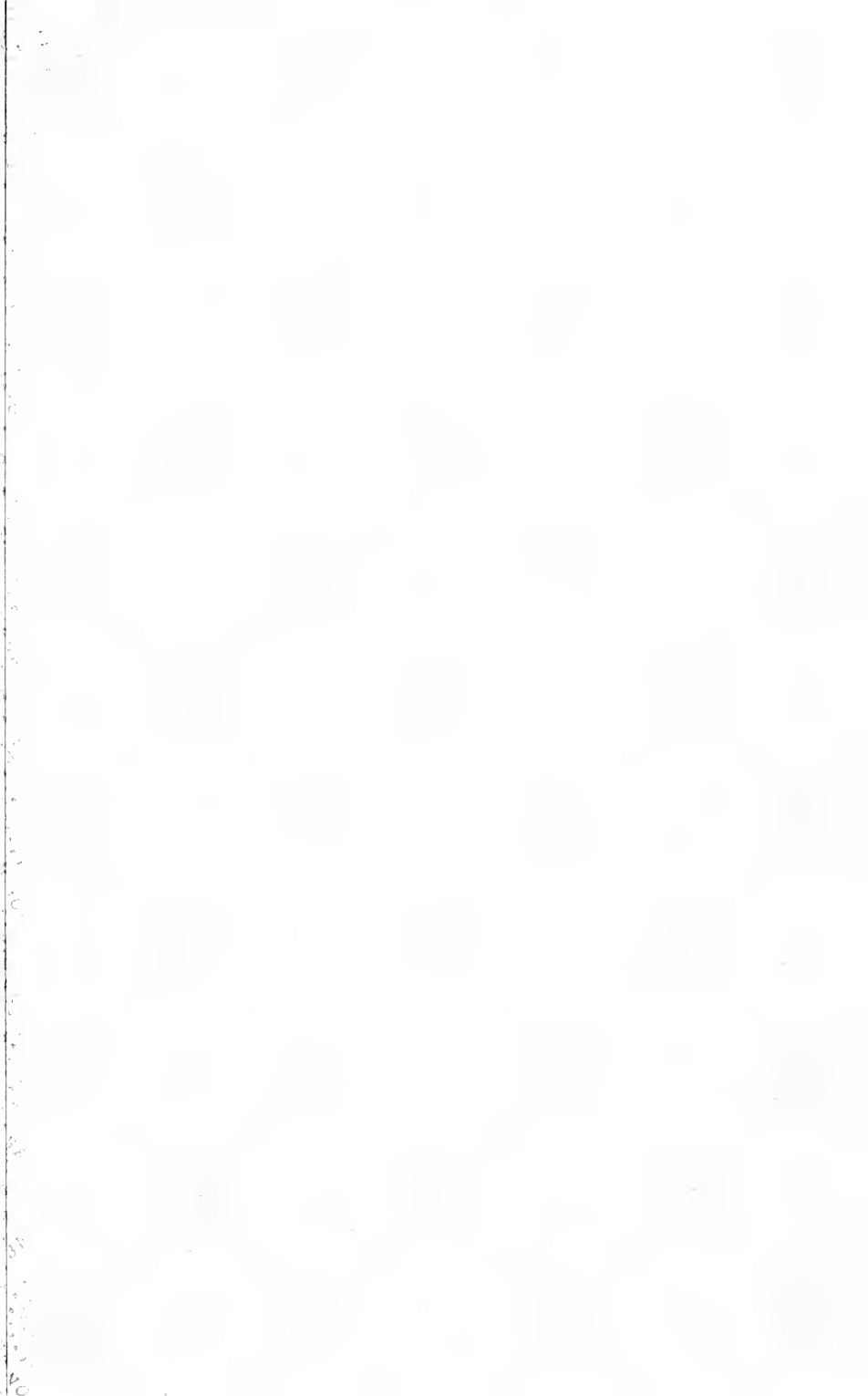


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# S P E E C H

OF

## HON. JOHN M. CLAYTON,

### AT THE DELAWARE WHIG MASS CONVENTION,

HELD AT WILMINGTON, JUNE 15, 1841.

*Fellow Citizens:*

The chief object I have in view, in this day addressing you, is to call back your attention, and that of the country at large, from the many distracting topics which now agitate the public mind, to the greatest of all the issues involved in the Presidential Election. The great question to be decided by that Election is a question of BREAD—a question whether we shall abandon the whole principle of Protection extended to the Laboring Classes of this Country by the Tariff Act of 1812, and adopt in lieu of it a Tariff discriminating for Revenue and against Protection: a question whether we shall go back, by our own voluntary act, to that state of colonial vassalage which existed in this country while England held us in subjection, and her Statesmen boasted that they would not permit us to manufacture a hobnail for ourselves; a question whether we shall now surrender to England one of the most essential blessings resulting from that independence for which the Whigs of the Revolution successfully contended. To every reflecting mind it must be apparent that but few subjects can be decided to the satisfaction of a majority of the People at a single election; and it is the old trick of designing politicians, to escape defeat upon subjects in controversy vitally affecting the country, by multiplying the issues to be decided, distracting the attention of the People, and dividing the majority on the dreaded questions by others of inferior importance. These are the tricks of all the enemies of Whig principles of the present day. Those gentlemen are well aware that a vast majority of the freemen of this country are decidedly hostile to the modern Free Trade doctrines, and as decidedly friendly to the Whig Tariff of 1812, embracing the Whig principles of Protection to Home Labor. With their new Democratic doctrine of Free Trade, all the leaders among them are conscious that they cannot go to trial before the country without incurring inevitable defeat. Within the past year, the friends of the Protective Policy have, every where, routed their opponents when this question has been raised in the elections.—

Our friends have unfrocked the partisans and advocates of British interests in this nation. They have torn the masks from the faces of those who prefer English to American Labor. The sheepskins have been stripped from their backs, and the wolves now stand out in their naked deformity.

To insure our triumph in this great question, our friends have at least adopted a determination, upon which our well are eminently depends, to reject, with scorn, alliance with, or assistance from all *cow-hags*, and such as pretend to occupy a neutral position between the contending parties on this question. This is a subject on which the American People can no longer be deceived by pretended friends or by enemies. And, at this moment, you see the foes of the American System, conscious of their approaching destiny, if the two issues shall be submitted to the People, are every where endeavoring to direct public attention from it to other subjects, presented for the purpose of exciting popular feeling. Let us guard against the wiles of our adversaries. Our situation, at this time, may be compared to that of a large family about to emigrate to the West. We have one wagon belonging to our concern, with an excellent team attached to it. We can carry in it all that is really necessary for our safety and our happiness. But we cannot carry every thing which the caprice or fancy of every member of the family may induce him to throw into it. If we suffer every one to pile in, among our necessities of life, all the trumpery which he may have purchased to carry with him, we shall soon find that there is not room enough for a hundredth part of it, and that *one team is utterly unable to haul it*. In this state of things, the only course left us, as sensible men, is to restrict the freight in the wagon to such things necessary to our safety and comfort, as we can certainly transport. But we will leave every one, who thinks he has the means of transportation, independently of us, to lug along what he pleases; and we will promise not to fall out by the way or quarrel with any friend who may choose to go

the journey with us, because he thinks proper to load himself down with articles which we are unable or unwilling to carry. The wagon and the whole cavalcade are now before me, about to start for the West. Henry Clay, the driver, knows the road well, and by his side sits Theodore Frelinghuysen, who is a good guide and experienced traveler himself. Inside of the wagon I see the proceeds of the Sales of the *Public Lands, with duties laid for Protection to home labor, a sound Currency, an economical Administration of the Government*, and divers other good articles, necessary for our safety and prosperity. But there goes a fellow behind, driving an unbroken colt in a cart of his own, filled up with *Texas Bonds and Texas Land Scrip*. As he wishes to go along with us, we shall not dispute with him about his freight; though I think he will not drive his cart over the mountains this year! There comes another man, tugging in the rear with a wheelbarrow, loaded down with two hundred millions of Government Scrip to pay off the State Debts.

He is a good fellow in the main, and decidedly in favor of our taking along every article in the wagon; but will insist on his peculiar notion that these State Debts must go in company with us; and while he works on his own hook, at his own barrow, I shall never quarrel with him or attempt to drive him back; though, if I must express my opinion, I think his freight will be swamped among the fens of Salt River. There comes another fellow, with horses attached to a cumbersome machine, moving on skids, outside of which you may see the protruding muzzles of a whole battery of cannon, and the inside of which is filled with ammunition, guns, drums and trumpets, and all the paraphernalia of War. That fellow is full of fight, and wants to go to war with either Mexico or England or somebody else, he is not very particular with whom. He wished to put all that freight inside of our wagon; but when we satisfied him we had not room for the fiftieth part of it, he agreed to bring it himself, with his own force, and I am not willing to drive him back, or quarrel with him about his whims; for although he, like the others, has his peculiar notions, yet he, as well as they, is in favor of our carrying every article we have in our wagon, and desires to accompany us as far as he can to defend and protect it. Yonder comes another fellow, tottering under the weight of a knap-sack, filled with treatises on PolITICAL Divinity and a thousand Sectarian Controversies. He ardently implored us to give him room in the wagon for all that luggage; but he was assured that if one half his tracts should be read on the road, instead of proceeding in harmony together, there would be a general fight among the whole company; after which, when Catholic and Protestant had pommelled each other soundly, the company would be separated into religious factions, and would never reach their place of destination.

He was informed, then, if he would take along his knap-sack, he must bear its weight, and keep its contents to himself; as the only tracts allowed to be carried in the wagon, or disseminated on the march, are those which inculcate *religious toleration*, in its widest and most liberal sense, and breathe no other spirit than peace on earth

and good will among *all men of all sects, classes and denominations*.

I can see also, (let me add) a rival train, with another wagon, behind all these, toiling hard to overtake ours, and bound for the same country; where they mean to settle, as squatters, for four years to come, if they can reach it before us. This wagon is a heavy lumbering vehicle, being but a clumsy attempt to imitate a celebrated carriage which came into fashion about the year 1840. The horses are old political hacks, many of them being spavined and wind broken: and most of them sorely distressed with the *thumps*, a disease contracted by them on a long journey up Salt River for years ago. Inside of this wagon you may see ponderous safes and chests of iron, upon which the brazen capitals are plainly legible, "SUB-TREASURY SEPARATES THE GOVERNMENT FROM THE BANKS, AND THE PEOPLE FROM THEIR OWN MONEY." On many of these massive chests we read "Hard Money for the Office Holders, and Bank rags for other people." On the top of all them, they seem to have piled Ossa on Pelion, as if they designed to put all Texas upon wheels, including parts of Mexican States of Santa Fe, Chihuahua, Coahuila and Tamaulipas; the whole crowned with the Texas debt of untold millions; by the side of which, on another package, you may read *No Assumption of our State Debts by our own Government*. But the heaviest weight of all presses on the driver's box where you may see James K. Polk, of Tennessee, holding his nags, four in hand; while George M. Dallas, sitting by his side, vainly plies a hickory gad to the execrated flanks of the jaded animals. The driver sits on a cushion of enormous weight, labelled "Free-Trade." Every part of this vehicle is of foreign manufacture. The very wood of which it is made, is of foreign growth—even the horse shoes were made by English blacksmiths; the harness is all manufactured out of English leather by English harness makers; all the wheel tire, the axle trees, and even the bridge bits, were imported from Liverpool. No American laborer, whether native or naturalized, was allowed to drive a nail into the wagon. Strapped up in the boot behind you may be seen a *Broken Treaty with Mexico* covered over with that "black flag," which Mr. Butler, in the last Baltimore Convention, predicted would prove the funeral pall of a certain concern, whenever it should abandon the principles that a majority should govern. A band of discarded office holders and office hunters surround the wagon, shouting, at the top of their lungs, for "Free-Trade and Texas," "Hard money and James K. Polk." There is a little fellow the editor of a paltry newspaper, blowing a penny-whistle, labelled "Down with all Corporations," while another of the same profession grinds a hurdy-gurdy to the old tune of "Bargain and Corruption," and the "Murdered Coalition." Near these is another of the same trade, riding on a donkey; while he drums on the dead hide of the Bank of the United States. Behind these comes off a *concerto*, in which you may hear the praises of harmonious Democracy chanted, amidst every variety of sound, from the twanging of a Jew's harp to the thrumming of a banjo. Whether this assemblage shall ever proceed further on their

journey than that Serbrian bog which lies near the sources of Salt River, I leave others to conjecture. Pharaoh pursued the Israelites till he was swallowed in the Red Sea. I feel too good natured just now to foretell the destiny of James K. Polk and his followers.

But, jesting apart, let me return, in all sober seriousness, to the true question, as I have already stated it—protection or no protection for the country—bread or no bread for the laborer. It is no part of my purpose to discuss that question at length. To enable others to understand it, I have only to refer them to the last article in the March number of Blackwood's Magazine. We may there learn how Englishmen reason among themselves when discoursing on the follies of the visionary doctrine of Free-Trade; and we may also learn from it how much credit we should attach to articles of a contrary import, written by Englishmen for the American market. English periodicals, written for the purpose of being read by American citizens, have done more injury to the cause of the American laborer than any equal number of publications on the same subject which have appeared in our country.

In connection with this subject, my fellow citizens, let me say, that there are not wanting, in the ranks of our opponents, men who have been bold enough to charge Henry Clay and Theodore Frelinghuysen, the chosen champions of Whig principles, with having abandoned the protective policy, by their votes for the Compromise Act of the 2d of March, 1833. It is my duty to defend these, my old associates in the public councils, against so unjust an accusation; and that duty becomes peculiarly imperative upon me, when inquiries are constantly addressed to me, as they have been of late, in regard to the true character of the votes which they gave on that memorable occasion. I cannot answer all these inquiries by letter. I will, therefore, this day, attempt to answer them here; for I see

"A chieff's among them takin' notes,  
An' faith he'll prent em;"

and I have reason to hope that his report of what I am about to say may reach those who have addressed these inquiries to me.

I was in the Senate at the time of the passage of the Compromise Act, was a member of the committee which reported it, and had the best possible opportunity of knowing the motives and objects of Mr. Clay, in the introduction and passage of that measure. His aim was not only to prevent a civil war and the dissolution of the Union, but to *save the Protective Policy*.—I am convinced that, but for the passage of that act, the protective system would have been substantially repealed, more than ten years ago, and every manufacturer in the country dependent upon it stricken down.

I know that nothing is more common than for us to hear certain individuals, who are utterly ignorant of the real circumstances which existed in the early part of the year 1833, in a spirit of idle bravado, boasting how bravely *they* would have defied the threats of the Nullifiers—how resolute they would have proved themselves, had the opportunity been offered them, in hanging up all the leaders of that faction, and how rejoiced they would have been in administering, through

the swiftly willing agency of Gen. Jackson, a salutary chastigation to what they term "the imbecile arrogance and bullying of South Carolina."—These and similar remarks are generally made for the purpose of introducing a condemnation of Mr. Clay for his agency in the passage of the Compromise Act, which they say was a sacrifice of the protective principle to prevent a war with the Nullifiers. Without doubting the courage or the sincerity of those who thus often boast of the superior firmness and more manly bearing which they would have exhibited at that crisis, I will endeavor, briefly to show you that these gentlemen are ignorant, both of the effect and meaning of the act, as well as of the objects sought to be secured by its author.

It is quite a common error that the act itself proposes a *horizontal Tariff* of 20 per cent. on all articles of importation, as the minimum rate of duties, and the final resting place at which the reduction of duties proposed by the act shall cease, and stand unchanged and unchangeable forever. At this day, gentlemen of intelligence, professing to understand and discuss the legal effect of this, often speak of it as a law, the great object of which was, by a system of gradual diminution, to reduce the duties as they stood under the act of 1832, to an universal levy of 20 per cent. at the expiration of nine years and four months. In other words, they regarded the Compromise Act as fixing one rate for all dutiable articles from and after the 30th of June, 1842, that rate being 20 per cent. ad valorem; and as containing certain binding stipulations or pledges on the part of the authors of that law, that no higher rate of duty should ever after that day be collected by the General Government. This supposition, preposterous as it is, you have doubtless observed, is an opinion quite commonly expressed, and that, too, not unfrequently by grave legislators on the floors of Congress. That the enemies of Mr. Clay should have so expressed themselves is matter to be regretted; but when the friends of the Tariff, and the very men who profess the utmost confidence in the rectitude and consistency of that great statesman, fall into the same error, it is high time the mistake should be corrected.

It is perfectly true, that the first section of the act fixes 20 per cent. ad valorem, as the lowest rate at which dutiable articles should be admitted, after the 30th of June, 1842; but the third section of the act provides that, from and after that day, "duties upon imports shall be laid for the purpose of raising such revenue as may be necessary to an economical administration of the Government;" and also that such duties shall be assessed on the *home valuation* and payable in cash. The leading principles established by the act were, first, that after the 30th June, 1842, a sufficient revenue should be raised from the import duties alone to defray the expenses of the Government; secondly, that no more revenue should be so collected than should be demanded by an economical administration of the Government; thirdly, that the best possible guards against frauds on the Tariff should be established by the adoption of the new system of assessing the duties on the *home*, instead of the *foreign* value, and making those duties payable in cash. Whether these du-

ties, from which all the revenue for the support of Government was to be derived, should be fixed at 20 per cent. or at 50 per cent. or at any other rate, was, of course, a subject left for the future consideration and action of Congress, whenever it should be discovered that the minimum rate of 20 per cent. adopted by the first section of the bill, was insufficient for the support of Government. Nothing was further from the intention of those who passed this law than to attempt to prevent future legislation, discriminating with a view to protect Home Labor, in the contingency of a defect of revenue from duties of 20 per cent. I have ever regarded the Tariff passed by the Congress of 1842, as a substantial compliance, in most respects, with this pledge in the Compromise Act with this exception only: that law, while it levies duties on imports to support the Government looks to the proceeds of the sales of the public lands as an auxiliary for that purpose; while the Compromise Act gave to me, as I thought when I voted for it, and to every friend of the protection system, at the same time a solemn assurance, that, after the 30th of June, 1842, the Land Fund should cease to be regarded as a source of revenue, and that all the real wants of the Government should be supplied exclusively from duties on imports, assessed so as to prevent frauds, and payable in cash.

To understand this subject, as it was really understood by those friends with whom I acted in the passage of the Compromise Act, it is necessary to recur to some other proceedings contemporaneous with it. Mr. Clay's Bill to distribute the proceeds of the sales of the Public Lands among the States, which passed both Houses of Congress about the same time with the Compromise itself, was by us regarded as *part and parcel of one great revenue and financial system*, which we desired to establish for the benefit of the whole country. While temporarily surrendering the Land Fund to the States, to which it rightfully belonged, in the judgment of the Congress of 1833, we provided, in the Compromise Act, that there should be a day fixed, at which, in accordance with a suggestion previously made by General Jackson himself, the Land Fund should for ever cease to be regarded as a source of revenue by the General Government. It is true, that we should have acted more wisely, as the event proved, by incorporating the provisions of a Distribution Bill in the Compromise itself. But who could have supposed, at that day, that President Jackson would have vetoed a bill which carried out his own suggestion? Nevertheless, he defeated that great and salutary measure of Distribution, by means which no end can ever justify. He refused to return the bill with his objections, to the House in which it originated—unquestionably because he had reason to believe, that, had he complied with this, his constitutional duty, each branch of Congress stood ready, by a vote of two-thirds, to make the bill a law, in spite of his veto.

I have said, that the Tariff of 1842 is, in my view, a substantial compliance, in most respects, with the principles of the Compromise Act, and the pledges given in that Act on the subject of the regulation of duties from and after the 30th of June, 1842. But it was not a compliance in all

respects. In my humble judgment, had the Tariff of 1842 been passed strictly in the spirit of the Compromise itself, it would have been a better Tariff for Protection than the law now in force. It would have better guarded the revenue against frauds in the foreign valuation; and it would more effectually have checked excessive importation, which is one of the greatest curses of our country. The Distribution of the Land Fund among the States, contemplated by the Compromise, and temporarily provided for by the Land Bill, would have put an end to the agitation of the question of Protection for ever; and the principle avowed and sustained by Mr. Clay, that, in laying duties for revenue, discrimination should always be made in favor of Protection, as an incident to revenue, would have been *the settled doctrine of the country*.

To show that this opinion is well founded, let us suppose that Congress, on the 30th of June, 1842, had resolved to make a Tariff strictly in pursuance of the Compromise. The latter directed, that, *after that day*, and not until after that day, duties should descend by a rapid reduction, not of 10 per cent. but of *the last half of the whole excess* above 20 per cent. left after the 31st of December, 1839, and that reduction be 20 per cent. on the home value of the imports, unless at that time, the revenue from that rate of duty should be inadequate to support the administration of the Government. Now how stood the facts on that day? We had actually incurred a national debt of more than \$20,000,000, at that very time, under the operation of a higher tariff than 20 per cent. and that, too, with the aid of all the land fund, and bank stocks and bank dividends besides. Our revenue had sunk so low that the credit of the nation was, at that very moment, in the most deplorable condition. We had borrowed on that credit till foreigners would not lend us another dollar, and in our own market the six per cent. certificates of the loan redeemable in twenty years, could not be sold to any considerable amount for any thing like their par value. We had approached the very verge of national bankruptcy, and but for the Whig revolution of 1840, which had elected a Whig Congress to decide our fate, we should at that moment have been in imminent peril of national repudiation. The depressed state of public credit was one of the contingencies anticipated by the friends of Mr. Clay, at the passage of the Compromise, and we now *know we were right*. We foresaw that the duties never could descend to 20 per cent; if that pledge to raise the duties to the standard of the wants of the Government, given in the act, should be fulfilled; and our hope—our belief was that before they could descend, by the operation of the law, to 20 per cent. men of all parties, seeing that the Government could not be supported on that principle, would confess old errors, and join with us, under happier auspices, in so adjusting the Tariff as that, while the wants of Government would be supplied from import duties, ample protection, as incident to the revenue, would be freely accorded to us, without farther strife. If, then, Congress had, at that time, raised the duties to the standard then fixed by the Compromise, we should have had a Tariff which would more effectually have protected home labor



than the act of 1812; because, although the duties would have been for revenue, with only incidental protection, (the very principle of the act of 1833,) yet those duties, without the aid of other sources of revenue, *would have been still higher than those of 1812*, and their collection far better guarded against frauds.

But the Compromise act caused a gradual reduction of duties until the 30th of June, 1812, and the question remains to be answered—"why did the friends of Protection to Home Labor consent to such a reduction even for a limited period?"

The answer might be a very short one. Under the circumstances in which we were then placed, it was palpable to the minds of those who voted for the Compromise that, unless we accepted that, we should have to submit to the speedy destruction of the whole Manufacturing Interest. But it is due to the subject that in answer to this question the circumstances to which I have alluded should be briefly explained. At the time of the passage of this law the violent opposition of many of our fellow citizens in the South, and of not a few elsewhere, to the whole Protective Policy, was unparalleled in the history of this country. South-Carolina, by her ordinance of Nullification, had openly defied the General Government, and had resolved that no duties should be collected within her limits. It is easy, at this day, after the storm has passed over, to speak of her resistance as a thing which could have been easily crushed by the exhibition of a little firmness. I never doubted, nor do I believe that Mr. Clay or any of his friends ever doubted, that the power of this Government was amply sufficient to enforce for the time the collection of the duties on imports, in despite of all the threatened hostility of South-Carolina and all other enemies of the Protective Policy. But it is due to the truth to say, that at that time South-Carolina had many sympathisers, and not a few adherents, in other parts of the country. We were every day in danger of a collision which might terminate in bloodshed; and in that event any man, tolerably acquainted with the American character, could anticipate, quite as well as I can now describe, the imminent danger of a protracted and bloody contest, which, if it did not endanger the Union, as I firmly believe it would have done, must have rendered the Protective System hateful to our countrymen, as the exciting cause of a civil war, and incapable of being maintained, except by the butchery of American citizens by American hands. I never did, and do not now, believe that any such system can be long maintained in a government like ours, if it cannot be upheld without a civil war. The friends of the Compromise, in the firm belief that the Protective Policy was entitled to the confidence and support of the American People, and would grow up and establish itself in their affections, if a violent civil strife could be avoided, desired, of all things, time—time for reason to resume her empire—time for the violent passions of men, then inflamed to the very verge of insanity, to subside; and they consented to a gradual reduction of duties for a limited period, with a view to the ultimate safety of the protective principle itself, as well as to avert the horrors of a civil conflict,

and to save the excited and deluded men who were rushing into these extremities, from the consequences of their own folly. In the midst of all these considerations, then pressing upon the attention of the friends of Protection, there was another staring us in the face which is too often forgotten or overlooked. At the very commencement of the session of that Congress which passed the act, President Jackson, in his annual Message, threw off the cloak of a "judicious" Tariff, and openly arrayed the whole power of the Executive against the Protective System. Then, for the first time, we heard from him the declaration, that "Experience, our best guide on this as on other subjects, made it doubtful whether the advantages of this system are not counterbalanced by many evils, and whether it did not tend to beget, in the minds of a large portion of our countrymen, a spirit of discontent and jealousy, *dangerous to the stability of the Union*;" "that a Tariff designed for perpetual protection had entered into the minds of but few of our statesmen, and that the most they had anticipated was a temporary protection;" and "that those who took an enlarged view of the condition of our country must be satisfied that the policy of Protection must be ultimately limited to those articles of domestic *manufacture* which are indispensable to our safety in time of war."

These and many other declarations against the existing Tariff in the President's Annual Message, almost instantaneously arrayed the mass of his party against the Protective policy throughout the whole Country. It required no gifted seer to predict its fate, if some conciliatory measure were not speedily adopted by its friends to allay the existing excitement. The President's Message against the Tariff was communicated to Congress, at that session, on the 4th of December; and with such expedition did his party in the House of Representatives act on that occasion, in pursuance of his suggestions, that on the 25th of the same month, the Committee of Ways and Means reported a bill to repeal the existing Tariff, and in lieu thereof, to collect a revenue of but \$12,500,000 by all imposts on Foreign Merchandize, the average duty on which, as proposed by the bill, was about 15 per cent. and that, to be assessed on the *foreign valuation*. This bill, which has sometimes been called *Mr. Verplanck's bill*, but which was really a measure emanating from the Executive, was actually far advanced on its passage in the House, at the time the Compromise was under consideration in the Senate, and its final passage in the House, was no longer problematical. It was a measure which, if successful, could not fail to prove an immediate death-blow to the whole Protective policy. Its passage had been forced through the Committee of the Whole on the State of the Union, after an ineffectual effort by the friends of American Industry to impede its progress; when, on the 23d of February, 1833, the friends of Protection in the Senate made the last effort in their power to arrest its downward tendency, and to stay for as long a time as possible, the hand which was extended for its destruction. At that critical moment, the question for them to consider was *not merely how much Protection was necessary for Home Labor, but how much of it*

could be saved. The bill in the House, backed as it was by the power of the Executive, and the public sentiment in its favor daily increasing, in consequence of the President's denunciations of the then existing Tariff, might be temporarily arrested by the action of a few Senators; but those very few Senators saw, that unless some compromise could be effected, while they retained their slender and very precarious majority in the Senate, the ultimate triumph of the destructive system, and that, too, at no distant day, was inevitable.

Time can never efface my vivid remembrance of the anxious responsibility felt by myself and those who acted with me at that moment. I did not rely upon my own judgment alone, nor upon that of my associates in the Senate, for the course I should adopt. I sought the advice of one who was a citizen of my own State, and who stood, at the time, at the head of the manufacturing interests of the country—a man whose extensive and minute acquaintance with the whole subject of the Tariff was not exceeded by that of any other man in the nation—one who had embarked largely in manufactures himself, and, was deeply interested for other manufacturers and withal, one whose exalted character as a man of pure, patriotic and honest purpose was unsurpassed. I refer to the late E. J. Du Pont, of the Brandywine. At my solicitation, he came to Washington to advise with me on the subject, and, after fully weighing all the circumstances which surrounded us, anxiously advised me to accept the Compromise, and to exert myself to procure its passage. He expressed strong apprehensions that we could not carry the Compromise in the face of the rival measure, which offered better terms to the enemies of Protection in the House; and when I represented to him that those who had been threatened with a rope by the President would prefer our bill to the bill in the House, on account of the paternity of the latter—the possibility that we might for a time arrest the passage of any bill in the Senate, and the deep solicitude felt by the Nullifiers to procure some measure of immediate relief, to save them from the consequences of their own folly!—he expressed the highest gratification at the prospect of the passage of the Compromise as the only means left of preserving the principle, to the maintenance of which he had devoted a great part of his own useful life. His judgment on the subject confirmed my own opinions; and I owed while he lived a debt of gratitude for his assistance on that occasion, which, although I never had it in my power to repay, yet have I never failed, either before or since his lamented death, to acknowledge. Thus assured, my feeble aid was freely given to that great measure; which, while it saved the manufacturing interest from sudden and utter destruction, soothed and conciliated the angry passions of men then ready to rush upon revolution and bloodshed, and gave ample time to the friends of the Protective policy to rally in its support before the dearest interests of the country could be fatally affected. Any attempt to withstand and repel the flood then rushing upon us would have been fruitless. It was clear that we should be swept away by the torrent. We preferred to divide, to divert, and to

retard it. And I then thought, and still think, that the mighty effort of Mr. Clay on that occasion to save his favorite measure from the danger which threatened it from every quarter, was the most triumphant act of his life.

After a most exciting debate on the merits of the bill, a great part of which was never published in consequence of the feeling into which friends had been betrayed, who had always, before that, acted together on this subject, the question was taken on the engrossment of the bill, on the night of Saturday, the 23d of February, 1833, and it was ordered to a third reading in the Senate by an overwhelming majority. At this stage, we arrested further proceedings in the Senate, in consequence of the constitutional difficulty of originating a revenue bill in that body. But we had secured our object, by thus indicating to the House the measure to which we were disposed to accede. On the Monday following, being the 25th of February, a successful motion was made in the House to strike out the whole of Mr. Verplanck's bill, and substitute the Compromise in lieu of it. The bill thus amended was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading on the same day; and, shortly after, became the law of the land.

It is too late now, after the experience the nation has had of General Jackson's influence while President, to pretend that it was not in his power in 1833 to have crushed the protective policy. His party was in the zenith of its power. It had abandoned every principle formerly professed by it, to which he had become hostile. It had sacrificed every institution and every measure which it had formerly advocated, as soon as he declared war against it. It is too late to say, that he had some friends among the tariff men, who could have influenced his own course. He had friends among the bank men; he had friends among the internal improvement men; and it was mainly by their aid that he was made a prominent candidate in 1824, and actually elected in 1828. Had the friends of the Bank, the internal improvement system, and the tariff, foreseen his policy in 1824, he could not possibly have obtained votes enough in the United States to have carried him into the House of Representatives as a candidate for election. His intentions on all these subjects were studiously concealed, pending his election; and when they were finally disclosed, they exhibited that generalship in politics for which he was deservedly distinguished. He killed off the institutions of the country in detail, always selecting the weakest first, destroying that with the aid of the friends of the others, before he ventured to announce any hostility to the latter; and never attacking the strongest, until the friends of the weaker measures, which had been victimized, became powerless. His first attack was upon the internal improvement system, and although it was quite a favorite with most of his western and northern supporters, on the day of his veto on Maysville road bill was sent to Congress, yet three weeks afterwards it had scarcely a friend in his party. The little remnant who dared to remonstrate against the veto were immediately proscribed, and turned out of the political church. "*Ucalegon proximus ardet*" The Banks' turn came next. His determined hostility to that was

disclosed immediately after he found himself successful in the destruction of the improvement system, and not before. "The General," said his friend, Felix Grundy, one day to me, "is a sportsman who must always have a cock in the pit." He had tried his apprentice hand on the internal improvements; and although, while he was a member of the Senate of the United States, he had, by all his votes carried that system to the most extravagant extent, and won golden opinions, by the latitude of his constitutional construction, among the dupes in the west; yet he crushed the whole of it so effectually at a single blow, after he became President, that his friends lost all influence with his gigantic party. Emboldened by this success, by the eclat which the enemies of internal improvements bestowed upon him, from all quarters, he sought new laurels of the same kind in a new field; and although, at no period before his election, had he even ventured to whisper his hostility to the Bank; although during the whole period of his service in the Senate of the United States, when, if he had harbored any hostility to the Bank on the ground of its unconstitutionality or dangerous tendency to our liberties, his oath of fidelity as a Senator ought to have compelled him to disclose it, he never breathed a word against it; yet as soon as he had got rid of the internal improvements, he declared war against the Bank, and effectually crushed that too.

True it is that the Pennsylvania Legislature, by a unanimous vote, had shortly before declared for the Bank. Did not his party friends in that body, immediately after hearing the news of the Veto, wheel into the party line, and unite in all his denunciations of that institution? True it is that George M. Dallas, the present Democratic candidate for the Vice Presidency, was the father of the Bank bill, was the man entrusted with the memorial of the Bank itself, was the chairman of the committee to which that memorial was referred, was the very man who reported the bill, voted for it, and spoke for it through all its stages. Did he not, with his brother Senator from Pennsylvania, who voted in the same way, turn about within a few days after the veto, and denounce the Bank? Who does not remember the predictions, at the time of that Veto, that there would be a great desertion from the President's party, in consequence of that act, and who has forgotten that nearly all of those who talked loudest in his party in favor of the Bank were whipped in and became clamorous against it, as soon as his Veto appeared? He vetoed the Bank bill in July, 1833, and as we have already seen, within six months after that he made war on the tariff. Can any reasonable man doubt what would have been its fate, if Henry Clay, with all the affection of a parent for the Protective Policy, had not rescued it from destruction by the Compromise Act of the 2d of March, 1833? But for the interposition of Mr. Clay the passage of the bill reported by the Committee of Ways and Means in the House, would, at no very distant day, have been inevitable. What might have been the fate of the Union, I leave others to conjecture. My business now is with the Tariff alone, and I confine myself to that.

Henry Clay was at the head of the Committee

which reported the Compromise Act. James K. Polk of Tennessee, his present rival for the Presidency, was at the tail of the Committee on Ways and Means in the House which reported the bill to which I have referred. To understand Mr. Polk, it is now necessary to understand that bill. Although he was the last named member on that Committee, and in the rear of the column which attacked the Tariff, there was no more thorough-going, no more denunciatory enemy of the Protective Policy than James K. Polk. But let us try him by the bill which he and his colleagues on that Committee reported, and by his votes as they stand recorded on the journals of Congress against the Protective Policy. This bill, which will be found to be the 14th document in the volume of Reports of Committees at the Second Session of the Twenty-Second Congress, reduces the duties on the 2d March, 1833, as follows:—all assessable, be it remembered, *on the foreign valuation*; on *Woolens*, to 15 per cent.; on all not exceeding 35 cents the square yard, 5 per cent.; on *Worsted Stuff Goods* of all kinds, 10 per cent.; on *Worsted and Woolen Hosiery, Gloves, Nets, Bindings and Stockinets*, 10 per cent.; on all other *Cloths, Merino Shawls, Flannels, Baizes and Cassimeres, Carpetings and Rugs* of all kinds, 20 per cent.; on *Clothing, ready made, of all descriptions*, 20 per cent.; on all *Cotton Goods*, 20 per cent, except *Nankins from India*, on which Mr. Potts's duty was 15 per cent.; and *Cotton Hosiery, Gloves, Mitts and Stockinets*, on which his duty was ten per cent.; as well as upon *Cotton Twist, Yarn and Thread*; on all manufactures of *Flax and Hemp*, or *Sail-Duck and Cotton-Bagging*, 15 per cent.; on all manufactures of *Tin, Japanning, Gilt, Plated, Brass, and Polished Steel*, 20 per cent.; on common *Saddlery*, 10 per cent.; on *Earthen and Stone-Ware*, 20 per cent.; on all *Side and Fire-Arms, Rifles and Muskets*, 20 per cent.; *Bridle-Bits and Glass-Ware*, 20 per cent.; on manufactures of *Iron and Steel generally*, a duty of 20 per cent.; on *Salt and Coal*, 5 per cent.; on every thing produced by the Farmer in the Middle and Northern States, Mr. Polk, who is a Cotton-grower, recommended, in this bill, one unvarying standard of only 15 per cent; 15 per cent. on *Potatoes*; 15 per cent. on *Oats*; 15 per cent. on *Wheat and Wheat-Flour, Butter, Bacon, Beef and Pork*.

Such was the character of that bill, from the passage of which Henry Clay saved the country by the adoption of the Compromise. Had a tornado passed over all the manufacturing establishments of the country at that time, it would scarcely have proved a greater curse than that measure, which had the earnest support of Mr. James K. Polk, of Tennessee. By reducing the duty on wool to 15 per cent, it put the knife to the throat of every sheep in the country. By a duty of 20 per cent on ready made clothing of all descriptions, it struck down a whole class of the most industrious and useful mechanics of the nation. If it had been a bill purposely designed to set fire to most of the mechanic shops in the country, it would hardly have had a worse effect upon the laboring classes. It would have fed us on potatoes from Ireland; and, at those periods when the farmers of the middle and northern

States were suffering most from the pressure of the times, our bred stuffs would have been grown on the borders of the Baltic and the Black Sea, instead of on our own soil. Let the farmers, mechanics and manufacturers of the country now answer what they think of the new candidate for the Presidency, James K. Polk, of Tennessee?

But I have not yet done with Mr. James K. Polk, of Tennessee, and his bitter hostility to the Protective policy. Search the records of Congress, and you will find that, in every instance where the American System was attacked, while he was in Congress, he was its assailant, its constant and uncompromising foe. On the 23d of June, 1832, he voted for the motion of Mr. McDuffie, of South Carolina, to reduce the duty on cotton goods, costing not exceeding 15 cents the square yard, to 12½ per cent. *ad valorem*. On the same day he voted for Mr. McDuffie's motion to abolish the duty of \$30 per ton on rolled iron. On the previous day he voted to reduce the duty on salt to 5 cents on 56 lbs. and voted against the duty on boots and booties, on cabinet wares, hats and caps, whips, bridles, saddles, carriages and parts of carriages, blank books, earthen and stone wares, and manufactures of marble; and also against the duty on wool. With this exhibition of the friendship of James K. Polk for the laboring freemen of all classes in this country, I might leave him in their hands. I have not referred to his public speeches on the Tariff, which always breathed the most settled hostility to the whole policy. Politicians sometimes speak one way, and vote another. Mr. Van Buren always spoke against the Tariff, but generally voted for it. There were several politicians of this school in Congress at the passage of the last Tariff. But James K. Polk was never of that school. He was, in deed as well as in word, on all occasions, an enemy to protection for the laborer. I mean to try him by his acts and his votes; and, without going further, I might leave those acts and votes, which I have thus exposed, to the indignant commentaries of the laboring men of all classes, with their friends and employers.

But I propose to do full justice to Mr. Polk on this subject. The People shall not misunderstand the extent of his hostility to the domestic industry of the country. On the 28th day of February, 1834, within one year after the passage of the Compromise, Mr. Hall, of North Carolina, in the House of Representatives of the United States, introduced a resolution, the object of which was to procure from the Committee of Ways and Means a report of a plan, accompanied by a bill to repeal the Protection guaranteed by the Compromise, under the pretext of immediately reducing the revenue to the necessary expenses of the Government; and James K. Polk, of Tennessee, who was at that time the Chairman of that very Committee of Ways and Means, voted for that resolution. There were sixty-nine yeas in favor of that resolution and 115 nays against it. In voting for the resolution, the deliberate design of which was to violate all the pledges given in the Compromise, Mr. Polk was backed by six of the nine members of that same committee, and by all the Nullifiers and ultra anti-Tariff men in the House. This movement shows the dissatisfaction with the Compromise cherished at an early

period by the enemies of protection. They were sensible that Mr. Clay had triumphed, by the salvation of his favorite policy; and the strength of the vote against the resolution shows how great that triumph was. But one year previous to the introduction of Mr. Hall's resolution, it would have passed the House by an overwhelming majority. The votes on Mr. Verplanck's bill, at that time, proved that conclusively. But the fact is, that the evil spirit of the storm—the spirit of disunion—which had been raised by Nullification, had been subdued by that master spirit, which, for thirty years, had exercised so great an influence in our public councils. That same master spirit had quelled the same demon, at the great crisis of the Missouri Compromise. On both occasions, Henry Clay saved the Union; and, in the judgment of many, in each of them, he saved the Union at its last gasp.

But the vote of James K. Polk and his allies in the war on Domestic Industry, was not the first exhibition of their spleen and hostility to the Compromise. Within six weeks after the passage of the act, the Executive of the United States began to violate its true spirit and its legitimate construction, for the purpose of breaking down our American policy. On the 20th of April, 1833, the Secretary of the Treasury under President Jackson issued his famous Treasury Circular to all the officers of the customs in the United States. That circular contained an Executive decree abrogating all the specific duties and the whole system of *minimums* in the existing tariff laws. Under a pretext as foreign from the views of all the men with whom I acted in the passage of that law, as any thing the most remote, this arbitrary edict declared, without one syllable in the act to support it, that it was our intention, in passing it, to repeal these specific duties and *minimums*. It is scarcely possible that any human being could have been so ignorant as not to know that a *specific* duty could at any time be as well ascertained as an *ad valorem* duty, and that these duties were convertible. By the Compromise, we simply provided that all existing duties (whether specific or *ad valorem*) should be reduced according to a fixed ratio. This outrage on the law, which, because the Executive, whose province it was to collect the duties, had perpetrated it, was utterly without remedy proved of great injury to all those manufactures which depended for protection upon the *minimums* and specific duties.

The injury inflicted on the manufacturing interest did not admit of legal redress, for the friends of protection could not by any possibility bring the question before any judicial tribunal, while the executive officers refused to sue for or collect the duties in pursuance of their instructions. Nothing remained for us to do but to submit in silence, until the returning sense of justice to the country should induce the people to drive the enemies of Domestic Industry from the high places of the Republic.

And here let me pause, for the purpose of entreating every friend of Home Labor, who has ever thought of voting for James K. Polk, as President of the United States, to take warning by the example which I have now set before him. If there be such a man, let him not lay the flat-

tering unction to his soul that he can save his favorite policy, while the Executive of the United States, with the officers of the customs appointed by him, is hostile to that policy. They have the collection of the duties for protection; and he who would commit the lamb to the custody of the wolf, will justly suffer for his own folly.

Before I have done with this subject, I ought to mention, in this connexion, what I think is another strong evidence of the hostility of James K. Polk and his political associates to the Protective policy, and other true principles of the Compromise Act. Although they continued in power from the passage of that law until the year 1841, they never attempted, in a single instance, to provide either by prospective legislation or by any Executive regulation, for any mode of assessing duties on the Home Valuation; nor did they attempt to pass a law raising the duties, prospectively, after the 30th of June, 1842, to the real wants of the government; although they knew, as well through the whole session of Congress of 1840—1, as we know now, one or both of these measures ought to be prospectively adopted, to save the Government from the danger of bankruptcy. The principle of the Home Valuation was a *sine qua non*, at the time of the passage of the act, with many of those who, like myself voted for it for the purpose avowed by me at the time, of saving the Protective policy. We considered that a vote for the duties fixed by the act, to be assessed on this principle, was essential to all intents and purposes a vote for *Protection*; and we determined, therefore, to compel Mr. Calhoun and his peculiar friends in the Senate to record their votes in the most unequivocal form, on the journal in favor of that principle. And here I cannot help complaining of the conduct of Mr. Calhoun, after the passage of this law, and especially after the period when most of us friendly to the Protective policy, who had voted with him for its passage, had left the Senate of the United States. How well his conduct comported with that feeling which a man who had received at our hands a shelter from the storm which threatened to annihilate him, I leave for him and others who are in the same category to determine. To explain his conduct I must refer to a few facts.

While the motion was pending to amend the bill by directing the assessment of the duties on the home value, a debate sprung up, in the course of which Mr. Calhoun repeatedly argued that the amendment was unconstitutional, and declared that it was impossible for him to vote for it. A number of Tariff Senators, friendly to the Compromise Act, with whom I was acting in concert, including, among others, Samuel Bell of New-Hampshire, A. Naudain of Delaware, Samuel Foote of Connecticut, and John Holmes of Maine, had resolved to compel all the anti-protectionists in the Senate to vote for that amendment, in every stage of its passage, or to defeat the bill by laying it on the table. We foresaw all the objections which have been since made to the adoption of that mode of preventing evasions of the law and frauds on the revenue; and we knew that the amendment necessarily carried with it Protection to American Industry. It was an unpleasant prescription for Mr. Calhoun; but it was not ill adapted to the peculiar disease under

which he labored. After he had frequently announced his unalterable determination to vote against the amendment, which he as often said it would be a violation of the Constitution, and against his conscience to support, a motion was made—and by myself—to lay the whole bill on the table; and, on the part of friends, I avowed our determination not to suffer it to be called up again during the session. At the request of a nullifying Senator, I withdrew that motion, to give himself and his friends time to reflect further; but, at the same time, they were distinctly given to understand, that, unless they agreed to vote for the amendment, at every stage of its passage, the motion should be renewed, and the bill nailed to the table; in which event, they must fight it out with the General Government. Those who are curious to consult the debates in Congress at that day, will see, by recurring to them, that, on the next day, when the bill was taken up again, every man among them, every enemy of the Tariff in the Senate, including the Honorable John C. Calhoun, of South Carolina, voted FOR THE AMENDMENT! His vote for the Home Valuation stands recorded on the journals of the Senate, at every stage of the passage of the bill; and he contented himself at the time, as he declared, during the passage of the Tariff of 1842, (when this vote was invoked in judgment against him by a Tariff Senator) by saying that he voted for it UNDER AN ORAL PROTEST! It is true, that promises made under the fear of death, are not binding in law; but it would be utterly inadmissible to suppose that Mr. Calhoun acted under duress; and it would be equally inadmissible to suppose that his vote was given with a view to procure the votes of others, then necessary for his own safety,—because such a vote would have been a palpable fraud upon them, if, at the time, he meditated an evasion of the pledge given in the amendment.

Two days after the passage of this bill, Congress adjourned; and, in less than three months, we learned, to our perfect astonishment, from the public prints, that Mr. Calhoun was, in South Carolina, exulting among his followers on account of what he called his *triumph over HENRY CLAY!* In the session of 1839, he even went so far as to tell Mr. Clay, on the floor of the Senate, that, at the passage of the Compromise, *he* was his master? It is true that Mr. Clay reproved the folly of this arrogance, and even told him “that he would not even own him for a slave.” But those who forced him into the position I have described, had then left the Senate; and the swaggering of Mr. Calhoun was not rebuked by them. I finish this sketch by simply stating the fact that Mr. Calhoun is now understood to be a friend to the election of James K. Polk, the peculiar friend of General Jackson, who, in 1833, threatened to hang him as high as Haman, and that Mr. C. is also the uncompromising enemy of Henry Clay!

It may be thought due to the occasion that, as I have touched upon the principles of all the candidates, I should devote a few moments to the consideration of the principles of Mr. Dallas. If the modern Democrats are satisfied with his votes in the Senate, I do not see why *we* should complain of them. He was the *father* of the bill to recharter the Bank of the United States, which

fell by President Jackson's Veto. He voted for the bill to Distribute the Proceeds of the Sales of the Public Lands among the States, on all occasions within my knowledge. And he professed to be so strong a friend to *Protection* and the Tariff policy, that he made a Speech against the Compromise, because it reduced duties, and voted against it, on its passage, for the avowed reason that there was not enough *Protection* in it for *him*. He stood alone by the side of a distinguished Tariff Senator in the debate against the Compromise, thus appearing not willing to yield any thing to save the peace of the country. One Southern Democratic Senator spoke against the bill, and was burned in effigy by some of his constituents for so doing,—although he actually voted for it. I hope Mr. Dallas may now share a better fate among his Democratic constituents in the same region. It is due to him to say, that we now understand that he has changed his principles on all these great measures; and that some of his friends insist that he is as hostile to *Protection* in every shape as James K. Polk himself.

But Henry Clay has never changed; and his exertions in the Public Councils, aided by his instructive eloquence, have done more for the cause of the Laboring Classes in this nation, and have made more proselytes to the doctrines of the *Protective Policy* than all the efforts of any other man in the country. At the time he commenced his labors in Congress to build up the American System most of the young men of the nation were educated in the Free Trade doctrines of Adam Smith, and the visionary theories of others like him, whose knowledge of Political Economy was obtained in the closet, instead of the Council Chamber. I was one of those who had imbibed these opinions; and if, for the last twenty years, I have been the steady friend of protecting American Interests against Foreign Competition, it has been mainly owing to the conviction produced on my mind by the perusal of those masterly specimens of argument and eloquence with which he sustained his favorite policy in the halls of the Capitol of our Country.

I have trespassed too long, fellow citizens, upon your patience; but allow me, in conclusion, by every consideration of what is due to the honor and interest of your country, by every feeling which ought to warm and animate your hearts as American citizens, anxious for the protection of your own industry and the welfare of all the laboring classes among us, to entreat you not to overlook the true issue, to be decided in November next, between Henry Clay, of Kentucky, and James K. Polk, of Tennessee. It is not a question about honors and offices and the rewards of partisan service; it is not a question about the payment of the State Debts, or the acquisition of foreign territory; it is, as I have said already, emphatically a question of BREAD—a question whether we shall sink the mass of the laboring freemen of this country, who now gain their bread by the sweat of their brows, to the level of the European paupers, who labor for sixpence a day and find themselves. It is an axiom of eternal truth in politics, that a nation completely impoverished will soon be a nation completely enslaved. If, by the abandonment of protection to home labor, we reduce a half a million of vo-

ters at an election to a condition of as servile dependence and as abject poverty as our Southern Slaves, how long can we rationally expect to remain a nation of freemen? More than a hundred and forty years ago the treaty of Methuen, which was one of the principal causes of the beggary and want of Portugal, reduced her to the condition of a dependency of England, struck down her national spirit, and enslaved her people. By that treaty she abandoned all right to protect her own industry, and agreed to admit British woolen goods of all kinds without duty or restriction.

Nineteen hundred years ago, when Rome had conquered the principal part of the world, and freely admitted supplies from Syria and Egypt into Italy, the industry of her own citizens was paralyzed by the withdrawal of that protection to which it was fairly entitled; poverty and want reigned where plenty had prevailed, and a race of men the bravest and the freest that ever lived were speedily converted into the subjects of a despot. And so keenly did Tacitus, one of the gravest and most philosophic of her historians, feel the degradation of supplying her legions from the industry of foreign countries, that he has announced with an *oath* of vexation and disgust, that deplorable change in her condition. Let us take warning from the examples of other nations. Let us guard and protect the real, not merely the nominal independence of our country. The ever fervent aspirations from every true American heart will be for the preservation of that independence. "*Esto perpetua*," MAY IT BE EVERLASTING.

#### The Great Issue for 1844.

The Nashville Union declares that Polk and *all his friends view the present Tariff with abhorrence*. So Mr. Payne of Alabama, Mr. Henley of Indiana, and every supporter of Mr. Polk in Congress who has spoken for him, has declared that his success will be the downfall of the Tariff. Hear Mr. Benton state the issue for 1844:

"The question itself is now on trial before the Areopagus of the people and must have its solution from that tribunal before we meet again. THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION INVOLVES THE FATE OF THE SLAVE, and to that fate a future Congress will have to conform, be our action now what it may. Now, as in the year 1832, the fate of the high Tariff is staked in the person of its eminent champion—its candidate for the Presidency of the United States. That champion was defeated then, and his system with him; and he may be defeated again."

"His system with him"—do you hear? The defeat of Mr. Clay is the destruction of the Tariff—so says Col. Benton, who was once a Clay man and then a Tariff man, but is now hostile to Mr. Clay and so to Protection. So says Senator Colquitt of Georgia:

"Most of the Whig Senators who have discussed this question, have, in an open, manly manner, admitted that the act of 1812 was a bill passed for *Protection*; that they advocated it because of its ample recognition of the *Protective Principle*; that it is a favorite Whig measure, to which all other measures are subordinate and of secondary importance. This is fair, and places the issue between the parties upon this subject to be determined by the American People—the Tariff Act of 1812, with its high duties and Principle of Protection on the one side; and the advocates of low duties and an equal system of taxation on the other."

But why need we multiply quotations? Who does not know that the Tariff is the great question? Who ever heard Mr. Polk, or any one for him, claim to be in favor of any sort of Protection till the late Presidential Election?

## MR. POLK'S HOSTILITY TO THE PRESENT AND TO ANY PROTECTIVE TARIFF.

From the National Intelligencer.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, May 30, 1844.

Messrs. GALE & SEaton: The interest which I feel, in common with the citizens of Pennsylvania, on the subject of the Tariff and the Protection of American labor, induced me to make an inquiry of Gen. HARDIN relative to the views of Col. POLK, the recently nominated candidate for the Presidency, on the subject of the Tariff. His answer to that inquiry, which he has been good as to tell me in writing this morning, presents the facts in relation to Col. POLK'S views on this all-absorbing topic in such an important light, that I respectfully ask for them from the people of Pennsylvania and the whole Union that attention which they deserve, and I have no doubt will receive; and I therefore request you to do me the favor to publish the enclosed letter of Gen. HARDIN.

Very respectfully, yours, &c.

JAMES IRVIN.

COL. J. K. POLK AND THE TARIFF.

To the Hon. JAMES IRVIN, of Pennsylvania.

SIR: Upon the announcement of JAMES K. POLK on yesterday as the nominee of the Baltimore Convention for President, which equally astonished Whigs and Locos, you inquisitively asked, "What are his opinions on the Tariff?"

According to the promise then given, I proceed to answer your inquiry. Mr. POLK is, and claims to be, a consistent opponent of a Protective Tariff; has advocated the principle of Free Trade, substantially; in 1833 was for restoring the Tariff to the rates prescribed by the Tariff of 1816; and has been a bitter rival of the Whig Tariff of 1842; is for its repeal; and is in favor of returning to the horizontal 20 per cent. rates of duty which prevailed at the time of the passage of the Tariff of 1842.

In the session of 1832-'33, Mr. POLK was a member of the Committee of Ways and Means, which reported a bill (which did not pass) greatly reducing the duties below those adopted by the Tariff act of the preceding session, (Tariff of 1832.) He made a lengthy speech in favor of the proposed bill, and against the Protective system, which will be found in Congressional Debates, vol. 9, pages 1162 to 1175. As a specimen of the views presented in that speech, I will quote a few short extracts:

"It appears from this testimony that the duties upon woolens, (wool fifty per cent.) may not only be reduced, but that twenty-five per cent. will be a sufficient protection, provided there be a corresponding reduction on the raw material, and the duty be fully and fairly collected; and that men manufacturers of cottons, and especially of coarse cottons, will be able to continue the business *profitably* at the reduced duty of *twelve and a half per cent.* on the raw material." "I propose next to establish, by testimony equally entitled to credit, the third proposition, which is, that the annual duties of the United States were in a proportion to the duties of the act of 1816, and for eight years intervening between the years 1816 and 1824, and also that the act of 1816 afforded them complete incidental protection."—(Congressional Debates, vol. IX, page 1174.)

The wool-growers consider the duty upon foreign wools insufficient to their prosperity. *The opinion, however, is founded in error.* Very little wool of the middle quality, such as we produce, is imported. The kinds chiefly imported are either the coarse South American wool, costing six cents and under the pound, or the fine Spanish wool, costing more than a dollar a pound, neither of which do we produce, or if we do, to a very limited extent.

"My own opinion is that wool should be duty free; but as

wool-growers think otherwise, we have retained a duty of *fifty per cent.* upon the imported article."—(Congressional Debates, vol. 9, p. 1174.)

In relation to the Tariff of 1842 we are at no loss for his opinions. Mr. POLK was a candidate for Governor in Tennessee in 1843, in which race, you know, he was a second time defeated by a large majority; and during the canvass he permitted no opportunity to escape him to denounce the Tariff in the most bitter terms. In response to an inquiry whether he "approved of such a Tariff as would give Protection to Home Industry against Foreign Industry?" he answered, as I am informed by gentlemen who are perfectly familiar with his views, as given on the stump and in his circulars, that *he was opposed to the principle of Protection.* His answer to this and other interrogatories will be published as soon as they can be procured from Tennessee.

Fortunately, however, I am at no loss for an authentic document which presents Col. POLK'S views of the Tariff of 1842. I have before me the "*Synopsis of Gov. Polk's Speech to the People of Madison and the adjoining Counties, delivered at Jackson, on Monday, the 3d of April, 1843,*" printed in pamphlet form, and written out for publication by Gov. POLK. From it I quote the following extracts:

"He took other views, briefly presented, of the subject, and proceeded to the discussion of the Protective Tariff not passed by the last Congress. He showed that it was a highly Protective Tariff, and not one for Free Trade. He showed that, by the Compromise Tariff of 1833, the tax on no imported article was to exceed 20 per cent. upon its value after the 3d of June, 1832. No higher duty than 20 per cent. was imposed on any article prior to the 3d of June, 1842, until the 30th of August, 1843, on which latter day the present Tariff law was passed by a Whig Congress. The Whig Congress had violent hands on the Compromise Act of 1833, and broke it up."

"It was clear, therefore, that the late Tariff act was not a revenue measure. It had raised the rates of duty so high as to shut out imports, and consequently to cut off and diminish revenue."

"Judging from the amount of revenue received at the Treasury, under the operations of the present Tariff act, for the last quarter of 1842, as already shown, it will not produce annually half the amount of revenue which would have been produced by the lower rates of the compromise act, had that act not been abandoned."

"He was opposed to direct taxes, and to prohibitory and protective duties, and in favor of such moderate duties as would protect importations. In other words, he was in favor of reducing the duties to the rates of the Compromise Act, where the Whig Congress found them on the 30th of August, 1842."

"The South, and he with them, had voted for the act of 1832 because it was a modification of the rates of the act of 1828, and why he means so low as he would have desired it to be; and why he advocates a reduction which could be attained at the expense of his species."

"The difference between the course of the political party with which he is now (Mr. John Brown) acts and myself, is, whilst they are the advocates of Distribution and a Protective Tariff—mine is, which I consider ruinous to the interests of the country, and especially to the interests of the Planting States—I have steadily and at all times opposed both."

These extracts conclusively prove the hostility of Col. POLK to the Protective Policy, which he considers "ruinous to the country, especially to the planting States." That is a sufficient argument with him. He therefore is now for "reducing the duties to the rates under the Compromise Act, where the Whig Congress found them on the 30th June, 1842;" and Gov. POLK himself shows "the tax on no imported article."

*ticle was to exceed twenty per cent. upon its value after the 30th of June, 1842.*" Then it is clearly seen that he is for a HORIZONTAL TARIFF of twenty per cent. with discriminations (if any are made) below even that rate.

I pass by, without comment, the far-seeing, statesmanlike predictions of Gov. Polk, that the Tariff of 1812 "*had raised the rates of duty so high as to shut out imports, and consequently to cut off and diminish revenue.*" The subsequent increase of both imports and revenue under this Tariff have given such a fulfilment to this prophecy as must forever immortalize Col. Polk as a wonderful prophet!

During the consideration of the tariff of 1842, as the revenue produced by the twenty per cent duties of the compromise act were altogether inadequate to defray the expenditures of the Government, a proposition was made to lay a duty on tea and coffee, for which a number of the Whigs in Congress voted, in order to increase the revenue and redeem the sinking credit of the Government. Col. Polk seized upon this vote to give a castigation to those Whigs who had voted for this proposition. This called forth a response from the Hon. MILTON BROWN, of Tennessee, and led to a political discussion at Jackson, Tennessee, where Col. Polk delivered the speech above referred to. He was most triumphantly answered by Mr. M. BROWN, who clearly demonstrated that the bill of 1833 reported by the Committee of Ways and Means, of which Col. Polk was a member, (and in favor of which he made the speech first quoted from,) proposed to impose a duty of twenty per cent. on tea and coffee.—At the time this proposition was made, tea and coffee were entirely free of duty; and another striking fact appears from Col. Polk's speech in 1833, that the Government then had "*six millions of revenue from the impost more than we need.*" [Congressional Debates, vol. ix, page 1174.] Yet, notwithstanding such was the admitted fact, Col. Polk voted against a proposition to strike out tea and coffee from the proposed bill, so as to continue them free of duty.—[Journal of House of Representatives 1832-'3, pp. 390 and 391.] But this subject was so ably handled, and Col. Polk's *ad captandum* objection so thoroughly exposed by Mr. BROWN in his response, to Col. Polk on that occasion at Jackson, Tennessee, that I must beg to call your attention to the extracts from his remarks which I here append: and I do so the more earnestly as it gives an insight into some of the traits of character of the newly made candidate of the Loco-Focos for the Presidency.

Coinciding as Col. Polk does in opinion with CALHOUN and the ultra anti-tariff-free-trade men of the South in his views on the tariff, it is not surprising that they should have been willing to compromise on him, nor is it at all astounding to hear that MESSRS. PICKENS and ELMORE, the *ministers plenipotentiary* from South Carolina to Baltimore, although refusing to participate in the proceedings of the Convention, yet, when the nomination was made, rose up in the Convention and pledged the vote of South Carolina for Col. Polk. And it now only remains to be seen whether that large portion of the Democratic party who believe in the policy and propriety of

bestowing fair protection upon American industry, will consent to be handed over without notice or consultation to the support of a free trade horizontal-tariff advocate, who is the *make-shift* candidate of the Baltimore Convention.

Respectfully yours,

JOHN J. HARDIN, of Illinois,  
WASHINGTON, May 20, 1844.

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